



The cast of *The Ministry of Biscuits* at The Lantern Theatre

The Ministry of Biscuits

★★★★★

The Lantern Theatre, Brighton, until Saturday

YOU don't know about the triple chocolate cream ginger nut surprise biscuit? You will, you will.

In a hilarious pastiche of every wartime propaganda film, show or radio broadcast, *The Foundry Group* pretends that the TCCGNSB is likely to subvert the population by sheer deliciousness and ruin a society which was happy to eat dull biscuits with a few holes and a dusting of sugar on top.

Their musical comedy show *The Ministry of Biscuits*, by Philip Reeve and Brian Mitchell, was actually written 20 ago. But the jokes get better with age and distance from wartime Britain.

Even if the recorded score from Eric Coates is a little unfamiliar to young audiences today, everyone knows about keeping calm and carrying on.

A wonderful cast send everything up mostly with a straight face, although David Mountfield as the caddish Babbington has a terrible time

not laughing.

Especially when his protective headgear from the fall-out of TCCGNSB keeps collapsing.

Murray Simon is an excellent "poisson froide", initially resistant to the antics of secret spy Amy Sutton in her guise as seductive Mata Hari and then refusing to fall in love with her once she is unmasked as Miss Braithwaite.

Author Brian Mitchell plays his Biscuit Minister with aplomb – a Gilbertian to his striped trousers, he is responsible for the Savoy-style patter songs and neat rhyming lists of everything from place names to biscuit styles.

Pianist Andy Smith accompanies with gusto, clearly relishing good strong melodies such as *Nobody Wants To Know* and providing a rhythmic bounce to songs and dances.

It is all terrific fun and a very entertaining evening.

And if you didn't think, when you were out walking your whippet, much about Highland shortbread or Rich Tea dunkers, you might now.

Louise Dumas

Event preview

Crazy For You

Theatre Royal Brighton, May 29 to June 2

CLAIRE Sweeney will take over the role of Irene in the national tour of the Watermill Theatre's production of *Crazy For You*.

High-octane and glamorous, *Crazy For You* is the ultimate feelgood musical with a score from the Gershwin brothers' songbook.

The show features mistaken identities, plot twists, heartbreak, happiness and memorable tunes, including *I Got Rhythm*, *They Can't Take That Away From Me*, *Nice Work If You Can Get It* and *Embraceable You*, all feature in this celebration of the great Broadway musicals.

Claire Sweeney has had a television and theatre career which spans some 20 years. She is best known for playing the role of Lindsey Corkhill in *Brookside*. Other television credits include *Clocking Off* and *Merseybeat* along with a presenting role on *60 Minute Makeover* and a panellist on ITV's *Loose Women*.

Her West End roles include Roxie Hart in

Chicago and Miss Adelaide in *Guys and Dolls*.

Tom Chambers created the role of Jerry Travers in the West End musical *Top Hat*, for which he was nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Actor in a Musical. In 2008 he won the sixth season of *Strictly Come Dancing*.

He can currently be seen in the hit BBC drama *Casualty* and his other TV credits include *Holby City* and *Waterloo Road*. Charlotte Wakefield made her West End debut as Wendla in *Spring Awakening*, for which she was nominated for an Olivier Award.

The cast is completed by Arthur Boan, Daniel Bolton, Hollie Cassar, Neil Ditt, Kate-Anne Fenton, Christopher Fry, Stacey Ghent, Matthew James Hinchcliffe, Kieran Kuypers, Kate Milner-Evans, Emma Jane Morton, Kate Robson-Stuart, Ned Rudkins-Stow and Seren Sandham-Davies.

Crazy For You is directed by Paul Hart with musical arrangements by Catherine Jayes.

It is choreographed by Nathan Wright and is designed by Diego Pitarch.

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